

31 May 2024

Jobs and Skills Australia

Dear Colleagues

Core Skills Occupations List

Universities Australia (UA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to Jobs and Skills Australia's development of the Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL). As the peak body representing 39 of Australia's comprehensive universities, UA strongly advocates for the inclusion of skilled occupations that attract and retain talented professionals that support a strong and dynamic university system.

Australia's universities are world class and rely on attracting the best global talent, as well as fostering Australian researchers and professionals. Australia's migration system plays a vital part in complementing the skills of the existing workforce. The Migration Strategy has committed to opening up new and streamlined pathways to ensure Australia can quickly and easily recruit top talent. This needs to be underpinned by a well-designed visa system incorporating a CSOL which is not determined solely on metrics.

A single consolidated CSOL may undermine the ability of universities to attract world-class academics into Australia. A more flexible approach to the CSOL will assist Australian universities to attract the right talent. This is crucial to building global collaborations that will support Government priorities, the development of emerging industries and create new jobs.

UA agrees with Jobs and Skills Australia's assessment that University Lecturer should be included as an occupation on the CSOL; however this occupation cannot be used to encompass all occupations within a university and we must ensure that the low in number, highly specialised, business critical positions remain on the CSOL.

University-specific occupations such as life scientist, biotechnologist and statistician are positions that are unable to be categorised as 'University Lecturer' and are of significant importance to undertaking cutting-edge research at universities. The removal of these occupations from the CSOL would impact on a university's ability to attract people with the specialised knowledge and experience needed to support Australia's advancement in areas of science and medicine.

Australia has strong and vibrant university and research systems due to our highly mobile workforce and our ability to attract research expertise from all over the world. If Australian universities cannot recruit the best and brightest academics internationally, it will have a detrimental impact on our own system through limiting the cross-fertilisation that great research and higher education requires.

The diversity of knowledge, innovation and expertise which support Australian universities' international standing and competitiveness cannot always be found locally. A Corporate General Manager and Faculty Head are positions that are strategically important, are in high demand and are business critical to the operations of a university.

Other occupations that UA would like included on the CSOL are: Program or Project Administrator, Laboratory Manager, Mechanical Engineer, Cyber Security Specialists and Software Engineers, Veterinary Nurse, University Librarian and Conservator.

Other broad but business critical roles that should be considered are Policy, Planning Manager, Management Consultant, and Finance Manager. These occupations allow universities to employ specialists who support business operations through sourcing critical revenue streams and strategic philanthropic investment which is used to support research, development and teaching in all fields.

Australia's universities offer some of the best opportunities for academic talent in the world through a combination of high-quality teaching and research. It is imperative that Australia positions itself as a world leader by recruiting the best talent available.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Sheehy
Chief Executive Officer, Universities Australia